

Dale Francisco

I'm Dale Francisco, Santa Barbara City Councilmember. I'd like to tell you why I'm running for the office of Mayor.

I grew up in Orange County and came to Santa Barbara in 1979. At UCSB I earned degrees in Computer Science and English Literature. Most of my career since has been in software engineering for computer networking companies, including Cisco Systems in San Jose.

My experience at Cisco taught me something about the dynamics of large organizations, and about fostering a good work environment that allowed my team to create products that customers wanted.

The city of Santa Barbara, with 1100 full-time employees and an annual budget of about \$250 million is a medium-size enterprise. I know something about how such organizations work. I believe our city is badly in need of new leadership, and that's why I'm asking you to vote for me for mayor.

For many months now the city and the state's economy has continued to worsen. Yet this spring the City Council majority voted to award pay raises and a new paid holiday to city employees, at the same time that local businesses and cities across the nation were cutting wages, cutting hours, and laying people off. I argued against those raises and against that holiday. I said we would come to regret it.

I lost that vote, but more important, the people of this city lost confidence in its leadership.

Back in 1992, when the city was beginning to recover from a recession less severe than the one we face now, an earlier, more prudent City Council established a budgetary reserve, a "rainy day fund." The common sense idea was that in good times, we'd add money to the reserve, so that in bad times we could draw on that reserve to maintain city services, even when city revenues were headed down.

Unfortunately, over the last several years, most of which were good years, City Council has treated that reserve like a credit card. And now the bill is due. We should have a budgetary reserve of \$11 million dollars. Instead we have a little over \$900,000.

What went wrong?

First, as I've said, people on the Council have spent money we didn't have on salary increases for city employees. We have a lot of dedicated, hard working, knowledgeable people working for the City of Santa Barbara, and we're lucky to have them. When their union representatives sit down at the bargaining table, I

expect them to try to get the best deal they can for their membership. What I don't expect is for the people on the other side of the table—ultimately, the City Council—to behave as union reps as well.

Many people are surprised when I tell them that our local public employee unions are among the largest contributors to City Council election campaigns. They ask me, "Isn't that illegal?" No, it's not. But I believe that to accept such contributions fatally compromises a Council Member's ability to be fair and objective in labor negotiations.

I'll never accept a dollar from our unions, or from our developers. I have to be free to work on behalf of all the people of Santa Barbara, not just to the benefit of a few.

Second, we have a council majority on autopilot when it comes to the budget. Council has left that job almost entirely to the city administrator, Jim Armstrong. I have great respect for Jim, but the Council isn't providing him the clear direction he needs. This failure to set priorities—and the misguided focus on misplaced priorities—is at the root of our problems with gangs, graffiti, homelessness, and all the rest.

Public safety is government's most important responsibility. Since 2004, City Council has eliminated 21 positions in the police department, while adding new employees in other departments. In the most recent budget hearings, the Council majority decided to cut yet more police positions. This disastrous policy has to stop. We need a mayor and council that will give our police the staff and the tools they need to do their job.

I think the people of this city want a Mayor and a City Council that focuses on setting and accomplishing common sense priorities: balancing the budget, keeping the streets in good repair, putting the bad guys in jail, keeping our parks clean and green, and all the other mundane but important tasks of city government.

As Mayor, getting back to those basics will be my focus.

This election, starting with the distribution of mail-in ballots to every registered voter in the city on October 5th, gives you an unprecedented opportunity to change city council and to change the direction we're headed.

I need your vote, and I need your help. This election is a crossroads for Santa Barbara. If we continue with the tired and mistaken ideas of my opponents, our problems with crime, vagrancy, and decaying infrastructure will only worsen.

I promise you that as Mayor I will do everything in my power to protect and enhance this city that we all love.

Thank you.